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## Planning Board 2013 Annual Report

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To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and residents of Ashburnham:

The Ashburnham Planning Board consists of five (5) elected members and one (1) appointed associate member. The Board has the responsibility of reviewing proposed development projects (residential subdivisions, business/commercial and industrial site plans, common driveway special permits, open space residential developments, accessory dwelling unit special permits and scenic road permits) and makes decisions on them in accordance with state/local bylaws and regulations. The Zoning Bylaws also allows the Board to review major residential developments to preserve the natural and cultural resources of Ashburnham by insuring the larger-scale of conversion of land to residential use does not consume all of the Town's woodlands, fields, farmlands, historic structures and landscapes, cart paths, stonewalls, geologic formations, water courses, wetlands, riparian zones, groundwater recharge areas, hilltops, scenic vistas, and other significant open spaces as well as providing a public voice and public authority in consideration of alternative approaches to conventional residential developments.

The Planning Board's official powers and responsibilities are provided through the Ashburnham Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Bylaws and as prescribed under the authority of the Subdivision Control Law enacted under Chapter 41, Section 81A-81GG of the Massachusetts General Laws. These rules and regulations have been enacted for the purpose of protecting the safety, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of Ashburnham by regulating the laying out and construction of ways in subdivisions and providing access to lots therein.

Following the 2013 Annual Town Election, Joseph McPeak was elected to complete the remaining 4 years of a vacancy created when John MacMillan moved away from Ashburnham. William Nolan was re-elected to the Board for another 5 year term. The five member Board reorganized and William Nolan was elected to the position of Chairman, Joseph Daigle was elected to serve as Vice-Chairman, and Roger Hoyt was elected to serve as Clerk to the Board. The Planning Board regularly meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

The Board is also responsible for preparing careful studies pertaining to planning issues in the Town and recommending zoning amendments for Town Meeting approval. Two (2) issues that the Board will be presenting to the Town for consideration at the 2014 annual meeting will be zoning amendments with respect to Large Scale Solar installation and Medical Marijuana facilities.

The Board continues to monitor previously approved Lakeview Estates, Cashman Hill Estates, Bray Avenue subdivisions and Lakeside Village condominiums during the construction process. Due to current market conditions all activity has stopped on these subdivisions during 2013.

No new Preliminary or Definitive Subdivisions were submitted to the Board during 2013, a continued sign of the slowdown in the housing market.

The Board did perform a Site Plan Review for the installation of a solar energy facility located on Murray Road. This facility was scheduled to begin operation prior to the end of December 2013.

The Board would like to thank the unsung hero who helps with all the day to day aspects of the Board, Land Use Administrator, Mary Ellen Kelly.

The Planning Board continues to have a great deal of information on the Town's new website it can be viewed at [www.ashburnham-ma.gov](http://www.ashburnham-ma.gov). The Planning Board may also be contacted by email at [planningbd@ashburnham-ma.gov](mailto:planningbd@ashburnham-ma.gov). We welcome your comments on the website. The Board also conducts Open Discussion at the start of each meeting, those having questions and concerns about the planning process in the Town are encouraged to attend.

Respectfully submitted,  
William Nolan, Chair  
Joseph Daigle, Vice Chair  
Roger Hoyt, Clerk  
Joseph Kalagher  
Joseph McPeak